



## **Mental Health Update**

**August 4, 2006**

### **Draft Proposed Policy on Conditional Voluntary Status for Psychiatric Inpatient Hospital Admissions Available for Public Comment**

For several years Vermont statutes have allowed hospitals to offer to people volunteering themselves into a psychiatric inpatient unit a "conditional voluntary" agreement which allows the hospital to hold the person for up to four days after the person requests discharge. In order to create clarity and uniformity among the hospitals in using this statutory authority, the Division of Mental Health is offering the draft proposed policy for public comment. It is posted at <http://healthvermont.gov/mh/update/mhupdate.aspx>. Please send comments to W.D. McMains, M.D., Medical Director, Division of Mental Health, Department of Health P.O. Box 70, Burlington, VT 05402-0070 or [bmcmain@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:bmcmain@vdh.state.vt.us). Comment will be taken until August 31, 2006.

### **Agency of Human Services Issues Consumer Reimbursement Policy**

Recognizing the importance of consumer participation on boards, committees, task forces or other workgroups, the Agency has recently adopted a consumer reimbursement policy to guide the provision of stipends and expense reimbursements for meeting attendance. The policy is intended to create a degree of uniformity among agency departments for compensation and expense reimbursement for appointed consumers (individuals or family members) who attend meetings. Outlined in the policy are the details related to stipends, expenses and the process for claiming these compensations. The policy also affirms the Agency's commitment to make every effort to make meetings and materials accessible to all members. The new AHS policy can be found at <http://healthvermont.gov/mh/update/mhupdate.aspx>.

## **FUTURES PROJECT**

### **Burlington's Housing, Health and Human Services Network**

Follow-up meetings with the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS), the Community Health Center of Burlington, and Howard Center for Human Services, as part of the ongoing community outreach plan have been completed to help develop the gap analysis between demand for services and current capacity. These agencies describe staffing and resource levels that are stretched thin. They anticipate increasing pressures for affordable housing, health and substance abuse services, case management, and other community supports for individuals who are from Chittenden County or who choose to re-locate in Burlington after hospitalization.

### **Futures Advisory Committee**

The Futures Advisory Committee will meet on Monday, August 7, 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. in the Skylight Conference Room, Waterbury. Agenda topics are:

- Dissemination of developing cost estimates for Futures services
- Increasing collaboration and reducing coercion in services
- Certificate of Approval (COA) process
- Work group updates
- Futures project updates

### **Answers to Questions from the City of Burlington**

As part of its ongoing communications with the City of Burlington, the State has provided written responses to questions from city officials. The questions are focused on the new primary inpatient psychiatric program proposed for the Medical Center Campus at Fletcher Allen, including the program's governance structure, inpatient capacity, public safety, community impact, and design and development. "Answers to Questions from the City of Burlington" is posted with this Weekly Update.

### **Leadership of Futures Project**

When Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health Paul Blake retires at the end of this month, the Futures Project will continue to have the support and leadership of AHS Secretary Cynthia D. LaWare as well as Acting Commissioner of Health Sharon Moffatt. Commissioner Moffatt will oversee the Vermont State Hospital and the Futures Project while Deputy Commissioner for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, Barbara Cimaglio, will oversee day-to-day operations of the Division of Mental Health. Commissioner Moffatt will attend meetings of the Futures Advisory Committee and work closely with Project Director Beth Tanzman. Recruitment of a new Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health is underway. We will be asking stakeholders to participate in the process of application review and interviewing candidates.

### **Public Hearing on Williamstown Residential Recovery Application**

Members of the public and a review panel heard a presentation by Michael Hartman on the proposed residential recovery program "Second Spring". Linda Corey, Jackie Leman, and Marty Roberts represented the Futures Advisory Committee on the panel. In addition, Representative Phil Winters (Orange 2 District), Clare Munat (NAMI-VT) and Sarah Clark (AHS Fiscal office) joined the review panel. Public comment was offered by Michael Sabourin, Rep. Anne Donahue, Xenia Williams, Morgan Brown, and Zachary Hughes. The testimony provided strong support for the proposal and also encouraged the applicant to explicitly state the channels for consumer and family governance regarding the project.

### **Public Comment Period Extended to August 10, 2006 on Williamstown Residential Recovery Application**

The Department of Health will continue to accept written comments about the proposal until the end of day on Thursday August 10<sup>th</sup>. Written comments can be submitted by regular mail to Dawn Philibert, MH Systems Development Director, Vermont

Department of Health, PO Box 70, Burlington, VT 05402, or electronically to [dphilib@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:dphilib@vdh.state.vt.us).

## **VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS**

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 50 as of midnight Wednesday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 49.4.